

FIGURE 3-13-1. Infrared imagery of tropical disturbance (Judy) while southeast of Guam, 16 August 1979, 1120Z. The star denotes the approximate location of a weak surface center discovered by a reconnaissance aircraft about 4 hours earlier. (DMSP imagery)

Of all the typhoons of 1979, Judy's significance was only surpassed by Super Typhoon Tip. Judy eventually developed into the year's second super typhoon, but more importantly, she served as a reminder of how rapidly a minor tropical disturbance can develop into a dangerous tropical cyclone.

Surface synoptic data from the beginning to the middle of August showed that the area south and east of Guam was fairly inactive. Good cross-equatorial flow was

present, but only a few flare-ups of convective activity were noted. Surface circulations were broad, ill-defined and transient. By 15 August, however, synoptic and satellite data revealed a tropical disturbance, about 120 nm (222 km) east-northeast of Truk, which was to eventually become Typhoon Judy.

This area was closely monitored by JTWC, and when the satellite signature began to improve, a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert was issued at 152100Z.

No significant pressure falls were observed over the area as the disturbance drifted slowly west-northwestward. A reconnaissance aircraft at 160700Z was able to define only a weak surface circulation with a MSLP of approximately 1006 mb and observed surface winds in the south semi-circle of 10 kt (5 m/sec) or less (Fig. 3-13-1).

Rapid intensification was not expected at that time, but at 161635Z, less than 10 hours after the aircraft investigation, weather radar at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, located a well-defined circulation center moving west-northwest toward Guam at 15 kt (28 km/hr). Gradient-level wind reports from Guam, Truk, Palau and Ulithi at 161200Z also showed that the low-level inflow pattern associated with the disturbance had increased in areal extent. The disturbance continued tracking toward Guam and at 161800Z the center passed over the Naval Oceanography Command Center (NAVOCEANCOMCEN), Guam building on Nimitz Hill (Fig. 3-13-2). NAVOCEANCOMCEN reported a MSLP of 1001.0 mb and a wind gust to 51 kt (26 m/sec) at that time. Based on this "first-hand" information, JTWC issued the first warning on Tropical Storm Judy at 161900Z. Post-analysis revealed, however, that Judy did not reach tropical storm strength until 170000Z.

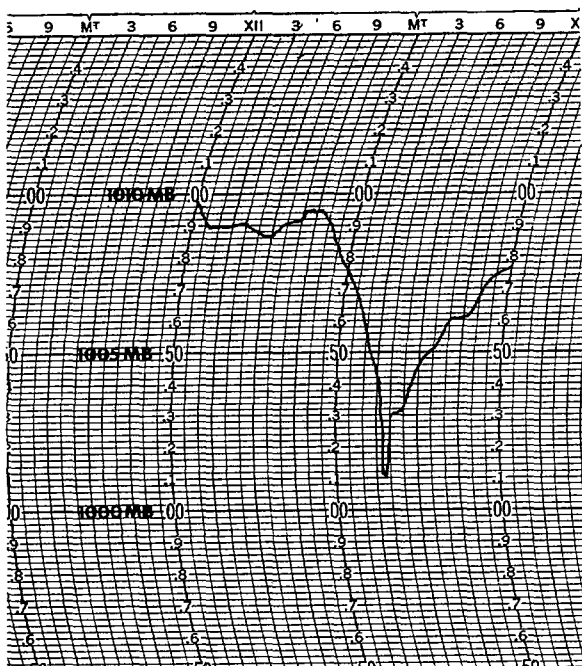


FIGURE 3-13-2. Microbarograph trace recorded at NAVOCEANCOMCEN, Guam during the passage of TD 13 (Judy) at about 161800Z, August 1979.

Judy intensified steadily while following a nearly climatological west-northwest track at 10-12 kt (19-22 km/hr) for the next 24 hours. She reached typhoon strength at approximately 180300Z. After that, a long-wave trough in the mid-level westerlies, moving over Japan toward the Pacific, fractured the subtropical mid-tropospheric ridge north of Judy, allowing her to track more to the northwest.

During the next 36-hour period, after reaching typhoon strength, Judy's central pressure dropped 69 mb and she attained super typhoon strength at 200000Z. Her lowest central pressure, 887 mb, was measured by a reconnaissance aircraft at 192145Z. Three distinct, concentric wall clouds were also noted at that time (Fig. 3-13-3). Super typhoon intensity was maintained until 201500Z, with gradual weakening thereafter.

Forecast aids indicated that Judy would pass to the south of Okinawa, but based on her persistence track and the deep trough that existed over Japan at 500 mb, Judy was forecast to recurve east of Okinawa. The steering aids were reacting to the mid-level PE Forecast series which built the ridge back between Japan and Judy. The numerical forecasts had not been verifying well up to that point, and, thus, the well-entrenched trough was forecast to persist. The numerical forecasts proved to be correct, however, and Judy did pass south of Okinawa before beginning to recurve into the East China Sea.

The rapidly intensifying ridge was expected to drive Judy into the Asian mainland south of Shanghai. The 500 mb analysis at 241200Z provided the first indication that Judy was not going to make landfall. At that time, she was just off the Chinese coast, but north of the mid-level ridge axis. Three-hourly synoptic reports from Sheng-Szu were watched closely and when the winds backed from east at 40 kt (21 m/sec) to north at 35 kt (18 m/sec), there was little doubt that Judy had, in fact, recurved to the northeast.

As Judy recurved, she was downgraded to tropical storm strength based on land synoptic data. Transition to an extratropical system occurred at 261200Z while Judy passed through the Korea Strait.

Due to being still relatively weak while passing over Guam, damage there was insignificant. Damage to Okinawa was also minimal, even though sustained winds of 40 kt (21 m/sec) were experienced for a 28-hour period. Southern Korea did not fare as well, however. One hundred eleven people were killed, over 8,000 houses were inundated, 57 vessels were destroyed and many thousands of acres of crops were ruined by Judy's torrential rains and strong winds.

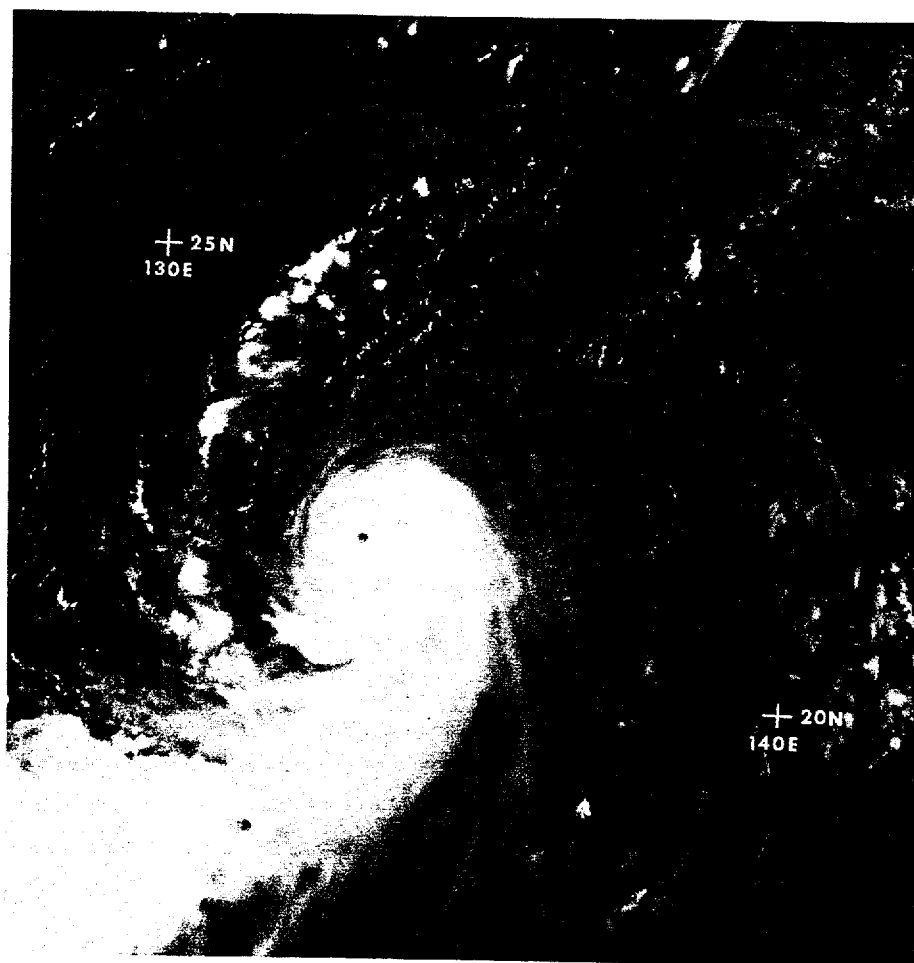


FIGURE 3-13-3. Judy as a super typhoon, 20 August 1979, 0219Z. (DMSP imagery)